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be contradicted,' said Brown, 'in matters of science which I understand; take them down, and cut new ones.' Jim carted his caps home, and after three weeks' time brought them back again to the building, nicely cleaned off and polished over with sand-paper, which made the brown stone a little lighter in color, and sure enough they suited this time 'to a T,' as Brown expressed himself. 'There is nothing like making these fellows do their duty,' he said to the owner, 'and show them that you are *boss* of the job.'

"There was no one whom Brown thought more of than John Clearstuff, the carpenter; they had grown up together when boys, and had been fast friends ever since. Whenever Brown was short, which was quite frequently the case, John was always ready to loan him a few dollars. Yet when Mr. Snodgrass remarked that he did not think those floor-planks exactly the thing, Brown ordered Mr. Clearstuff to take them away from the building, and never to send anything there but what was according to contract. 'Philologus! what under the sun was the meaning of your proceedings this morning?' said John; 'you know as well as I do, that those planks were according to agreement; there wasn't a fault in them! What do you mean?'

"Why, John, never mind," said Brown; 'I have to find fault once in a while, or else Mr. Snodgrass will think I am not doing my duty.'

"And pray, how is it possible," asked the steel T Square, "that your friend Brown got any business at all under the circumstances?"

"By drumming."

"And what is drumming?"

"Drumming is running to every one who threatens to build a house or a store, and offering one's services, until the proprietor thinks the easiest way to get rid of you, is to employ you. Besides, Brown had much to recommend him; he had the reputation of being an honest, amiable, and obliging man; a man who had his eye-teeth cut, and could not be taken in by the builders. He told every one, moreover, after handing him a list of references, that he was an 'eminently practical man—and no mistake'—and so he was."

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If learning could come intuitively, I have no doubt that it would enrich genius; but the toil and absorption of mind bestowed in acquiring it, the unoriginal habits of thinking, nay, the prejudices liable to accompany its acquisition, the cramping of the soul from its natural impulses and meditations, these, I apprehend, are the drawbacks on whatever advantages inspiration may receive from laboriously acquired erudition. It was predicted of a young man lately belonging to one of our universities, that he would certainly become a prodigy, because he read sixteen hours a day. "Ah! but," said somebody, "how many hours a day does he think?" It might have been added, "How many hours does he feel?"—*T. Campbell.*

OBSCURITY.—Painting, when we have allowed for the pleasure of imitation, can only affect simply by the images it presents; and even in painting, a judicious obscurity in some things contributes to the effect of the picture; because the images in painting are exactly similar to those in nature: and in nature, dark, confused uncertain images have a greater power on the fancy to form the grander passions, than those have which are more clear and determinate.—*Locke.*

Architecture.

AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS.

Meeting of January 19th.—After the general business of the evening, Mr. R. G. Hatfield submitted an instructive report, setting forth the results of experiments made by himself and Mr. J. Welch on the resistance of the various stones employed in building.

Meeting of February 2d.—A communication was received from Mr. R. M. Hunt, Librarian, in which he stated, that his efforts in several directions to obtain works of interest for the Institute, had been crowned with success. Both private associations and public corporations had manifested a deep interest in the welfare of the Institute, and he was confident that before the expiration of another year, the collection of books belonging to the Institute, if not in every sense worthy of it, would, at least, be of sufficient importance to make the librarian feel proud of the charge intrusted to his care.

By order, R. M. HUNT, *Secretary.*

THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY BUILDING.

"Young men," quoth he, "be sure you both are wrong, And all your theories are not worth a song. The point is one that elder heads have puzzled; Presumptuous boys like you should all be muzzled."

COLLOQUIAL.

WHENEVER we see the bust of a gentleman standing out of doors in stormy weather without covering, we feel a Christian desire to do for it as we would wish to be done by under similar circumstances, and an umbrella immediately suggests itself to our mind. But when, added to this, the bust be that of a *stranger*, choked up on the top of a window cornice, between two coping-stones sticking into its sides like the starched shirt collar of a Bowery dandy: when, moreover, the bust aforesaid is placed close against the wall on an exceedingly slim and shaky pedestal, without an inch of ground behind it to retreat to in case of an emergency, our sympathies prompt us to run to the next engine house for hook and ladder to render that assistance which appears a solemn duty to us, and which every gentleman of taste and feeling owes to a work of Art in distress.

But then again, the police and the boys would not fail to raise a row were we to attempt an act of charity on so large a scale, and so we contented ourselves by creeping up on the front stoop of the building, on the southeast corner of Second avenue and Eleventh street, early one morning before people were stirring in the streets, and when policemen were taking their second nap, to say a few words of condolence to a piece of statuary balancing itself in a most dangerous attitude in the veritable predicament described above, exhibited there on a kind of stone tight-rope, thrown carelessly over a couple of ornamental brackets.

"How do you do, sir? A fine morning," we observed, by the way of opening the conversation.

"I do but indifferently, and think the weather rather cold and disagreeable. A few more such frosty mornings after a long night's rain will play the mischief with my nose. If it should be found on the sidewalk one of these fine days it would be a just punishment to those who placed me here."

Now there was an opportunity to gratify two desires dearest to our heart, first to find out who the bust really was, and who

placed it there, and second to render every assistance in our power :

" If you will repose confidence in a stranger, who is willing and anxious to render you a service, by stating who you are, and who placed you there, I may be able to use my influence with the parties to have you removed to more safe and comfortable quarters."

" I have not the slightest doubt of your good intentions, for which I shall ever remain under obligations to you ; but you will be somewhat surprised if I tell you that I know no more who I am than you do, and that all the information I can give you on the subject is, that I am placed here by the orders of the Historical Society, the owners and occupants of this building, and that I am *meant to be* Herodotus, of historical celebrity. My private opinion, however, is that I am rather a badly managed fancy than a historical fact, and that my position here is no better than a practical joke played both upon the public and myself."

We stated our regret that we were not personally acquainted with all the highly respectable gentlemen composing that society, but that we knew them by reputation to be men of good sense and high moral character ; that we would mention the matter through the press, and that we had not the slightest doubt but that any impropriety committed by them through mistake would be remedied the moment the matter was fairly brought to their consideration. When we took our leave, we promised ourselves to return in the course of the day to examine the building *outside* and *in*, and give our readers a short description of it, with the hope that it may reach the trustees of that society, and that they may take active steps in the matter.

On examining the building we were greatly puzzled to know what may have been the object of the Historical Society in selecting the designs of that structure as a monument of their institute. Even with an abundant allowance for human imperfections, we could not connect it with any acknowledged style of architectural art without doing violence to the style, if not to the building. After many fruitless suggestions we concluded that it was meant to represent a *naked fact*, typical of true history. Such is the infatuation of our conceit, we felt for a long time perfectly satisfied with our solution of the enigma, and in order that the expectant public might not lose the valuable information, we immediately put it in black and white ; but a host of doubts vigorously attacked our young theory. What could be the object in its being so shallow ? What hidden meaning in its meagreness ? There must be some reason for the great difference in the treatment and character of the first story windows from all the rest of the openings. Could it be a mere accident that the cornice seems somewhat too tight for the building ? What's the perpendicular division of the front, in three parts, meant to imply ? Meagreness and shallowness are indications of the imperfection of human knowledge, hence the necessity of historical societies. The apparent tightness of the cornice may, after all, be no tightness at all ; perhaps, the cornice is quite full enough in itself, only the building is a trifle too large. The three divisions of the front we supposed to represent *fact, fancy, and fiction*, *fact* and *fancy* on each side, and *fiction* in the centre. Hence the minute projection of the centre parts flanked on each side with weak and straggling rustics. Our theory is established. No ; stop. There is a difference in the windows, too strongly marked to be a simple slip of the pencil in the hands of a skill-

ful architect. " We cannot account for that. There is no resource for us but to see some architect of established reputation, and have him cut this Gordian knot for us.

Now, dear reader, if you wish to avoid a law-suit, consult the best lawyer you can find before you quarrel with your neighbor ; if you desire to retain your health, consult a physician before you cram yourself with mince-pie ; and if you want an opinion in matters architectural consult an architect before you rack your brain with endless theories. Our friend the architect heard our story, and listened patiently to our doubts ; he smiled benevolently at our theories, and after learnedly blowing his nose, delivered himself thus :— " As a fellow artist I sympathize with you in your dilemma ; but as a man of the world, a man of business, I cannot but feel concern for your short-sightedness. The Building Committee of the Historical Society, looking around for a proper design for their building, which should not be *too expensive*, and at once suggest that period of American Art which flourished at the time of the establishment of that Institution, selected among the sketches of architects who were apt to be quite moderate in their charges, a design possessing the endearing peculiarities of the infancy of Art, relying upon the bust of Herodotus to supply force and character to the building, which that obstinate heathen refuseth to do. You see that the fault lies not with the Building Committee, nor with their architects, but with Herodotus, who will not deserve the confidence so generously reposed in him."

Now, the interior of the building we found in perfect harmony with the exterior, but not quite so much in harmony with itself. The first objects of interest on entering the hall are two iron posts of majestic proportions, and considering their size and material, strong enough to assist Atlas in supporting the world ; but yet, in this case, themselves suspended from a plethoric mahogany stair-rail, which stair-rail appears to perform the feat not only of carrying those posts, but also a cast iron stair-case, which is united to the same by means of exceedingly attenuated iron castings, representing — Well, we must give that up, we cannot tell *what* they represent. The main hall is a collection of large Corinthian columns, rather crowded, supporting archlets (a new word for under-sized arches), and a *quantum sufficit* of cornice. The interior of the library consists of two tiers of galleries supported by more Corinthian columns, rather weak ; but all cast in iron, from the same pattern, without reference to the apparent weight imposed upon them, which gives the whole an aspect of security and strength highly comforting to nervous minds.

If we admire one thing more than another in this admirable interior, it is the painting, which consists of a painful white, relieved with occasional gilding, put on with great regularity, around all the edges of the leaves of the capitals and other places equally appropriate. The monotony of the white paint is carefully relieved by wainscots grained in imitation of oak. When we have stated that the hall floor is laid with encaustic tile, and that there is a very large skylight over the library, so contrived as to throw no light above the bottom of the picture-frames hung along the upper gallery, we think we can do no better than say no more about it.

P. S. It has been suggested that the bust of Herodotus might be firmly anchored to the building, in order to give it an air of greater security. The iron band encircling the head might be adjusted in the form of spectacles, which would give a learned expression to the venerable features of that bust.